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ABSTRACT

Materials developed by high school anthropology students to investigate and explain American culture are presented. The purpose of the handbook is to aid social studies classroom teachers as they develop and implement educational programs on the American way of life within the context of global culture. The activities presented in the handbook can be conducted inexpensively within most school and community settings. The 38 topics are grouped into four major areas of investigation: (1) cultural values and belief systems, (2) social and political organization, (3) language and communication, and (4) economic systems. Each concept area is introduced by a brief overview. For each topic, information is presented on focus, teaching procedures, and feedback. Topics include American sports behavior, commercialization of American celebrations, cultural ideas of behavior in various types of restaurants, body language, group membership, consumption of luxury items, and cultural definitions of right and wrong. Activities involve students in interviewing family and community members, observing behavior in fast food and gourmet restaurants, collecting recyclable material, drawing sociograms, conducting library projects, doing map exercises, debating, and maintaining logs of daily activities. (DB)

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BUDGET ANTHROPOLOGY

Integrating Anthropology Concepts Into a Social Studies Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

Most anthropological materials developed for classroom instruction rely heavily upon the exotic appeal of other cultures. The contrast of alien lifestyles with Western civilization is both striking and instructive. However, schools and teachers who lack the funding necessary to purchase an expensive anthropology curriculum or, who merely wish to supplement an existing program, can successfully turn the anthropologist's perspective on the American way of life.

Although the popularity of college anthropology has increased steadily in recent years, many classroom teachers still hesitate to employ an anthropological approach because of an inadequate background or lack of confidence with unfamiliar materials. The anthropologist has too often been stereotyped as a pith-helmeted adventurer cutting through impenetrable rain forests to contact a Stone Age people. The persistence of this Jungle Jim stereotype has incompletely and inaccurately characterized the discipline as one exploring lost civilizations and undiscovered tribes. The resultant research reports and monographs are fit grist for National Geographic and Lowell Thomas, but teachers become frightened beyond an eye-catching bulletin board or television special.

The expense and controversy currently surrounding the preparation of secondary curricula in anthropology have not bolstered the confidence of local school systems and their professional staffs. Several national curriculum projects carry price tags in the thousands of dollars; an Arizona Congressman has attacked one program as totally inappropriate for school-age children, and the resultant furor has further reduced the role of anthropology in the education of today's youth. The growing national movement towards basic education, often interpreted locally as a return to more traditional programs, is a further threat to the anthropological approach. Given such mounting pressures to the contrary, why should a teacher interested in anthropology and its conceptual approach persist in his classroom activities? Why spend money, alienate parents and colleagues, and teach about vanishing cultures today's students will never know? The arguments for rejection are expedient; yet, the arguments for acceptance are compelling.

Anthropology need not be exotic nor expensive. The key to the anthropological approach is comparison- not tc point out bizarre human differences, but to stress the unity and commonality of being human. Local conditions and circumstances may vary greatly, but the physical and social needs of mankind remain universal. Concepts which can be examined through the study of alien lifestyles- barter, for instance- also appear in the operation of any neighborhood flea market or yard sale. High school clubs and college sororities meet the criteria of voluntary social groupings and age sets like Kunta Kinte's West African initiation class in Roots. Today, more and more anthropologists are successfully turning their investigative tools upon modern societies, and classroom teachers can profit from the same methodological shift. Any local community offers a low-cost, controversy-free laboratory for anthropological study.

This handbook is a collection of student investigations designed to capitalize on the economy and facility of local anthropology. These suggestions can be used (with appropriate modification and explanation) at any level with students of any ability, to strike comparisons with non-Western cultures as described in a textbook or to plumb the depths of American society. Whatever their classroom application, these experiments aim to involve students in the objective exploration of their way of life within the larger global context of the human adaptation- CULTURE.

Alan Fraker
The Asheville School
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June 1, 1978

I. Cultural Values and Belief Systems

No concept is more central to the work of anthropology than culture, yet no term is more elusive to define. One way in which an omnibus concept like culture can be simply defined for classroom study is to individualize it as one's world view, the way in which one perceives his own existence and its many daily ramifications. Individual culture, in turn, defines a society: it is the trademark lifestyle of those individuals within a group, growing out of centuries of experience and reflection. It helps to order the lives of individuals within the society, yet it changes to meet the evolving physical and social requirements of the individual and his culture.

Every culture, then, has its characteristic ways of looking out onto a changing world and making sense out of what it sees. The values of that society become the judgements it makes about the desirability or undesirability of its cultural affairs. Certain values, like the undesirability of incest and murder, are shared by most of humanity; others, like an idolization of rock stars, are shared by smaller groups and individuals within a society. The distinguishing attributes within this maze of expectation and actualization give a society its cross-cultural identity without, and every individual must enjoy the security and suffer the responsibility this cultural prescription brings within.

Methodology

The student investigations herein place a premium upon observation. The preliminary focus of an exercise is discussed in class, students collect data in the field, and return to the classroom for a feedback session generalizing about the obtained information and its possible interpretations. All handbook suggestions are structured in this three-step fashion, although the nature of observation techniques varies from one investigation to another.

The role of the student ranges from passive to active participation. Some studies require no first-hand observation of social and cultural behavior, but rather ask students to analyze data already collected: yearbooks, records, tapes, maps. In some observation settings, the student must remain unobtrusive or even unnoticed; in his daily routine he becomes a participant-observer. A few investigations even require the student to contrive a situation after Candid Camera; the resultant manipulation of social and cultural codes, if the subject remains unsuspecting, can produce authentic anthropological data.

Completed student investigations can be integrated into the classroom curriculum in a variety of ways. Data can illustrate concepts in a behavioral science curriculum; aspects of American culture can be amplified in an American Studies program. Generally, teacher purpose and student preference should determine the final means of data organization and application. This handbook is loosely organized into four overlapping spheres of anthropological investigation: cultural values and belief systems, social and political organization, language and communication, and economic systems. This internal order is by no means a rigid breakdown and teachers should not hesitate to use the studies herein as generally or specifically as they see fit.

The 'Nacirema' Perspective

FOCUS: Membership in a culture unconsciously blinds its members to the eccentricities of its rules and behavior patterns. One's unquestioning acceptance of and belief in a culture above all other cultures, ethnocentrism, frequently gives an individual a feeling of cultural superiority towards members of other societies and their 'unusual' behavior patterns. Consequently, it has always been easy for social scientists to judge non-Western, 'primitive' societies; a different perspective, simultaneously inside and outside one's own lifestyle, is need to be objective about one's own culture.

PROCEDURES: Students should observe any daily event or series of events in American society and try to describe their observations as an outsider unfamiliar with what they see, rather than as at-home insiders. Shaving could thus become a facial laceration; a football game is transformed into a fertility pageant with vestal maidens and gladiators. These 'objective', culture-free descriptions can then be read to classmates who attempt to identify the everyday event in question.

FEEDBACK: Western anthropologists looking at other cultures have long reported behavior unusual and bizarre by American standards. Yet, by non-American standards, many aspects of American culture are equally strange. Horace Miner's classic essay on American toilet behavior, The Body Ritual of the Nacirema, clearly illustrates this reversal as do other descriptions of American artifacts and institutions, including the automobile and the football bowl game.[1]

[1]Miner's essay is reprinted in many sources, including Fersh's anthology, Learning About Peoples and Cultures. See Bibliography.

In The Year 2525

FOCUS: Just as all behavior has a specific cultural reference, so do the artifacts of a society. Archaeologists and ethnographers, lacking the historical milieu of a tool or an object associated with a culture, are frequently forced to speculate about the function of an item based on its structure and apparent utility. Oftentimes, this sophisticated guesswork relies upon analogy with artifacts familiar to the scholar and his way of life.

PROCEDURES: The teacher assembles a grab bag of twentiety-century artifacts: pocket knife, chap stick, marbles, ticket stubs. Students are twenty-sixth century archaeologists or visitors from other galaxies who must describe their discoveries to an audience totally unfamiliar with the unearthed culture.

FEEDBACK: Culture and time-bound descriptions of the artifacts' structure and function are obviously unacceptable. Students quickly learn to appreciate the margin of error implicit in any anthropological or archaeological investigation. A presentation and discussion of legitimate historical artifacts can follow up the futures simulation to reconfirm this investigative problem of cross-cultural interpretation. Or, science fiction stories can be used to reinforce this notion. One archaeolcgical short story, "Digging the Weans", offers an abridged account of the excavation of Washington, D.C., in the distant future.[1]

[1]Extracts appear in Edwin Fenton's Shaping of Western Society teacher handbook (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967).

What Is An American?

FOCUS: A stereotype is one variety of printer's plate which can be used to produce the same image over and over again. The term has been borrowed by social scientists to describe the propensity of a society or culture to conveniently catalogue itself and others in terms of attributes and characteristics which most of the culture's members seem to share. Stereotyping is convenient in an encounter with a stranger from another culture, but stereotyping dangerously ignores individual differences. Initial cultural and social contact may be eased through the stereotype, but individual reluctance to explore beneath the myth can lead to irreparable misunderstandings.

PROCEDURES: Submit a list of 20-30 descriptive personal adjectives to the class, and ask them to pick the five descriptors most characteristic of Americans, five typical of Russians, five typical of the Chinese...

FEEDBACK: Justly or unjustly, every major nationality and ethnic group is widely stereotyped. Scotsmen are thrifty, Germans are militaristic, and Texans like things big! In discussion, the cultural and historical reasons behind these stereotypes should be explored and exploded. A culture's persistence in stereotyping and being stereotyped should be examined against the historical dimension of time.[1]

[1]Oliver LaFarge discusses evolving American Indian stereotypes in an American Heritage article, "Myths That Hide the American Indian", in Historical Viewpoints, Volume I. ed. by John Garraty (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

Otto Lindenmeyer looks at Afro-American stereotypes throughout his book, Black History: Lost, Stolen, or Strayed (New York: Avon, 1975).

Beauty Is In The Eyes Of The Beholder

FOCUS: Matters of taste and preference vary from individual to individual and group to group, with surprisingly few cultural common denominators. There always seems to be general agreement among judges and spectators that a Miss America is physically attractive, socially gracious, and artistically talented; however, these normative definitions of acceptability and desirability fluctuate dramatically from culture to culture. The integrity of each culture's choices, cultural relativity, must be upheld in a world of increasing commercial homogeneity.

PROCEDURES: Paste a group of pictures onto a card and ask the subject to rank them according to an agreed-upon criterion. If the pictures are of people, beauty may be the discriminant. Cars, food, clothing, and other consumer items could easily be ranked in similar fashion.

FEEDBACK; This investigation can go beyond a Madison Avenue consensus if subject interviews are expanded to include other races, other age groups, different sexes, and different nationalities. Cultural and sub-cultural preferences can be defined and contrasted for a variety of groups within American society and, where population permits, across cultural boundaries.

A Day In The Life Of...

FOCUS: Acceptance of new knowledge and ideas by a culture frequently entails social and behavioral realignments within that group. If, for example, one member of an Eskimo group subsisting on harpooned seals suddenly receives a carbine as a gift from an appreciative anthropologist, the socioeconomic base and power structure of the group can change dramatically. This process of cultural alteration, culture change, is most often associated with modernization and irrevocably modifies the lifestyle of those individuals who undergo it.

PROCEDURES: Students maintain a log of their daily activities around the home or at school for a week. Parents, grandparents, and neighbors are then asked to recreate one of their typical high school days. The comparison of daily lifestyles over several generations measurably demonstrates the acceleration and the impact of culture change.

FEEDBACK: Specific areas of these journals invite comparison. Technology has readily facilitated domestic chores (no more wood-chopping and coal-banking); access to recreation and entertainment has increased with more leisure time and the growth of media electrcnics. Doubly intriguing comparisons occur when people recall rural backgrounds and compare them with modern suburbia.

A Visit To The USA

FOCUS: Other cultures and regions of the world have readily been described and catalogued by Western anthropologists to facilitate historical colonial occupation, and, more lately, to ease business investment and tourism. Students of applied anthropology have traced its genesis to the cultural exigencies of culture contact and conquest- giving anthropology an unpopular nickname: the 'colonial science'.

PROCEDURES: Most foreign embassies in Washington, D.C., offer inexpensive travel guides to their nationals who visit our shores. Where language permits, these guides can be mail-ordered and perused for an international look at American society. Using these guides as a framework, students might choose to prepare similar tourist manuals for their own area.

FEEDBACK: Looking at the tips and warnings offered to those who visit our nation provides interesting material for discussion. Why are visitors warned to avoid New York City streets by night when they can fearlessly stroll through Tokyo's parks around the clock? Why is the All-American lunch, a hamburger and a shake, hard on the visitor's digestive tract? Outsider-perceived strengths and weaknesses of American society offer us a critical cultural counterpoint.

You're On Candid Camera!

FOCUS: Social and cultural interaction is governed by a complex set of rules outlining the obligations and expectations of the individual parties involved. The folow of these cultural exchanges is generally unrippled when the parties thereto follow appropriate cultural guidelines. A violation of these rules of conduct, however, can seriously disrupt orderly cultural interaction.

PROCEDURES: Students can use their imaginations to construct a number of cultural violations as participant-observers. One popular violation involves dress codes: wearing a tuxedo to a greasy spoon or wearing jeans and tank-top to an elegant restaurant. Behavior appropriate in one cultural context always produces interesting results when staged in an inappropriate context. Regardless of the violated social situation, the reactions of the unwitting participants will be predictably similar. Culture codes taken for granted to the point of habit are not easily broken.

FEEDBACK: In the restaurant example, people dining at MacDonald's simply don't wear evening clothes, or dine by candlelight, or listen to Bach on a tape deck. While subjects' emotions may range from anger to delight, their surprise at and recognition of the cultural warp will be instantly obvious. Caution must be exercised, however, to prevent social and legal repercussions from these investigations. Nudity, quite acceptable in the locker room, was once the risqué fad of streaking. One teacher suggested this option to a student but lived to regret the aftermath. Experimental design in this area must walk the fine line between inappropriate and illegal behavior.

Honk If You Believe

FOCUS: In America's media-conscious society, people frequently flaunt aspects of their belief systems in the forms of bumper stickers, political buttons, and T-shirts. Advertised membership in a variety of associations and visibility of one's values give an individual instant recognition and identity in today's somewhat transient and anonymous society.

PROCEDURES: Election years and vacation travel facilitate this investigation. Students should station themselves in a busy shopping center, park near an intersection, or tally data while driving. Stickers, buttons, and shirts can be typed by theme or issue in religion, politics, and other areas of public concern to assess the extent of individual involvement. A rough quotient of candidate or issue popularity could even be developed through this survey.

FEEDBACK: An in-depth approach to this investigation would include a cataloguing of visible variables bearing on the public advertisement of belief. What make of car, type of clothing, age, and sex of the subject might influence the type and number of such belief statements?

The Missing Mail Box

FOCUS: The values of many Americans are express through membership in a myriad of voluntary associations and special interest groups. The society-wide reaction to these groups and the demography of a group's membership can be estimated in some interesting ways.

PROCEDURES: Students address an arbitrary number of letters to themselves, including a return address from a recognizable and prominent interest group (National Organization of Women, Ku Klux Klan). Assuming that people tend to mail letters they like, and discard those they dislike, how many letters which have been conveniently 'lost' will end up being delivered to the students' doors?

FEEDBACK: Many attitudes can be measured through this contrived technique. What happens to KKK mailings in a black neighborhood? How many wealthy suburbanites will forward a Republican party mailing? a Democratic one? A random geographic cross-section of lost letters in any community can test the acceptability of different issues and programs. If time permits, students may choose to hide near a mailbox and observe personal reactions to their letters. Appropriate characteristics of the finders could be tabulated and correlated with their decisions to mail the lost letter, leave it, or discard it.

Rock Around The Clock

FOCUS: The values and beliefs of a culture are frequently expressed artistically. Many anthropologists study the representations of these ideas in a variety of art forms: painting, textiles, sculpture, and music. Specifically, the study of a culture's music, ethnomusicology, can pinpoint changing beliefs through time of a culture and its subgroups.

PROCEDURES: Asking students to do what they would do anyway- listen to popular music- creates a painless investigation. Students can identify major themes in any type of music- Country and Western, Soul, Acid Rock- or they can trace the evolution of a lyric theme through time. The Vietnam conflict, for instance, was glorified by "Those Brave Men of the Green Beret", but vilified by the woman who begged "Billy, Don't Be A Hero".

FEEDBACK: Students seem to prefer a cultural theme over a genre of music. Love, conflict, sex, civil rights, and generational differences can all be traced historically and philosophically thrcugh pop music. Magazines and paperbacks are available offering lyrics and trade comments on songs illustrating a variety of subjects.[1]

[1] Social Education, the journal of the National Council for the Social Studies, has an excellent review of this technique in its May, 1975 issue. See "Images of the Future in Popular Music" by B. Lee Cooper, pp. 276-286.

II. Social and Political Organization

Culture and society are predicated upon social interaction. Getting up in the morning is much more than a physical process; it reawakens a human being into a complex world of social rights and responsibilities. The average high school student, for example, runs downstairs to breakfast as a son and a brother; a member of the family. At school he is a student, a teammate, a drummer in the band. He may become an Eagle Scout, or the leader of a street gang, or one of many newspaper carriers. The proliferation of roles and role behavior in a complex society quickly multiplies to staggering dimensions.

Out of this social swirl emerges each individual with a distinct cultural identity. As part of a larger social system, this identity functions within culturally-defined limits. When a disruption violates this cultural pattern- a student attacks a teacher, for example- dispute and conflict mar the orderly processes of society. At this point, regulatory mechanisms (often codified as laws) are engaged to insure the resolution of the disruption and the restoration of social harmony. These regulations, administered by those who are power-and-authority endowed within the society, aim to regain social equillibrium and perpetuate the social and political order. The social swirl, on the surface a confusing array of roles, nontheless rights itself decisively and an internally-ordered system continues.

The Population Boom

FOCUS: Cultures are created and sustained by populations. The nature of the culture- its economic, political, and social institutions- is largely determined by the size and density of the population. High population densities often necessitate adjustments of space and subsistence modes; low densities correlate with rural lifestyles and minimal cultural communication.

PROCEDURES: This investigation can be conducted entirely as a library project. Census data for a political unit can be matched with its area to come up with a rough population density ratio. These figures can be compared from area to area: town to town, state to state, nation to nation.

FEEDBACK: Within a community, students may wish to conduct their own neighborhood surveys. Precinct voting records can be helpful, or telephone books, and dorr-to-door head counts can ascertain a small local population. Measurements and comparisons should include the obvious differences among urban cores, greenbelts, and farming areas; different subsistence adjustments within these areas of different density; and discussion of the felt quality of life in these areas.[1]

[1]A widely-circulated Gallup poll taken in December, 1977, showed that people who live in rural or semi-rural areas generally feel happier than urban residents. This data can be compared with experiments of overcrowding with rats and pigeons and the problems attendant to population concentration.

On The Road

FOCUS: There is greater and greater territorial and social mobility in today's complex societies. Considering time zone changes, a British banker can now have a comfortable breakfast at home, drive to the airport, and arrive on Wall Street in time for its morning opening. At day's end, he can fly home on the same supersonic transport and arrive in time to see the late show. Conceivably, he could then take a comfortable night's sleep and repeat the commute the next day. Generally, this travel and relocation is a function of the social and cultural opportunities (and financial!) another territory offers.

PROCEDURES: A map of the United States is required for this activity. Ask students to locate everywhere they've lived, and perhaps extend this survey to parents and grandparents (and perhaps to a world map). Attempt to identify when the moves were made and the ages of the people in question at the time of relocation. Questioning the subjects' reasons for each move will also offer insight into cultural patterns of mobility.

FEEDBACK: In a popular work of social research entitled A Nation Of Strangers, sociologist Vance O. Packard asserts that Americans are fast becoming nomads. This hypothesis can be examined with the results obtained in this investigation. Invariably, the pace of relocation seems to pick up with the most recent generations and diminish through historical time. Periods of widespread mobility also appear: the Depression, World Wars I and II. Mobility can also be correlated with particular points along an individual's life cycle: the first job of the new college graduate, the retired couple fleeing to the Sun Belt.

The Territorial Imperative

FOCUS: In his book entitled The Territorial Imperative, Robert Ardrey suggests that most animals, including man, establish territorial boundaries for themselves and members of their social unit. Intrusions into this territory by an outsider will be met with protest and resistance.

PROCEDURES: Students can readily observe the animal aspect of this concept by watching dogs staking out territory in their neighborhoods. Displays of human territoriality are as readily available, but again call upon student imagination and tact for their observation. Some suggested explorations follow:

-Walk up to a student you do not know and put your books in her desk or locker.

-Sit in your teacher's chair and order everyone to sit down and prepare for class.

-Approach another student and drop a small item like nail clippers or lipstick into her handbag.

-Sit down on the fender or hood of a car, especially if the driver is inside or will return to the vehicle shortly.

FEEDBACK: Humans defend their property and territory as dramatically as the situation warrants. Further discussion of the notion of 'turf' might include gang wars like those rumbles of the Jets and the Sharks in West Side Story. History and literature have long recorded feuds between powerful families: the Appalachian Hatfields and McCoys, the Guelphs and the Ghibbelines in Europe, and Shakespearean Montagues and Capulets in Romeo and Juliet.

Chains Of Command

FOCUS: Patterns of direct contact and communication between the members of a finite group within a culture comprise one of the key focii of anthropological field study. Extrapolating from the individuals and families he observes, the anthropologist can make general statements about the community and the culture at large. One field tool anthropologists use to record and catalogue these interpersonal patterns is the sociogram.

PROCEDURES: Students should make a diagram of every possible two-person relationship (dyad) in the group under investigation. A tally is made every time an exchange occurs; the frequency and directionality of the exchange should also be noted per the sample below:

Father

Mother Son

Father to Mother
Father to Son
Mother to Father
Mother to Son
Son to Father
Son to Mother

FEEDBACK: TV groups like the Archie Bunkers provide non-threatening data for students. Broken families and personal circumstances often embarass students and make them unwilling to share data with classmates. Other good alternatives for a sociogram include the classroom, a clique, or an athletic team. Patterns of leadership and authority emerge from the group and often reflect internal attributes of status, age, and sex.

After studying the results of a sociogram, students can then consciously violate the pattern. The most popular student can be snubbed, a teacher can be bypassed or ignored, and provocative consequences are guaranteed.

Kinship Algebra

FOCUS: Confusing arrays of family members and kinsmen may be quantified and ordered through the symbolic notation of kinship systems. Patterns of descent and relationship become immediately apparent when displayed on such a kinship diagram.

PROCEDURES: Younger students, in particular, leap at the opportunity to symbolically represent their families in one concrete, comprehensive diagram. It will be necessary to instruct students in the use of the necessary simple symbols; Schusky's manual serves as a basic reference.[1] As an introduction to this activity, students can diagram simpler social units like a nuclear family.

FEEDBACK: In situations where a family or lineage is broken through death and divorce, students may be reluctant to share their history with classmates. In such cases, the option of studying TV families or clans in literature should again be made available. This fictional approach also serves as a good warm-up exercise and helps students overcome their reticence. Diagramming of non-Western kin units from a textbook or photograph can offer a cross-cultural view of social structure.

[1]Schusky, Ernest L.; Manual for Kinship Analysis; (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972).

The Matinee Idol

FOCUS: There is a near-universal human tendency to place a hierarchy of value on the things and events in life. In the social sphere, certain people, because of their personal set of differentially-valued attributes, are ranked higher by that society. This social rank influences one's identity within discrete segments of the community and within the larger culture.

PROCEDURES: Students collect a set of biographical attributes associated with people of different rank within American society. Qualifications of political candidates and the drawing power of entertainment stars are readily analyzable in this fashion. Those attributes which seem to be most highly valued by the segments of American society who elect and sustain these individuals can then be discussed. Variations on this approach would compare the characteristics of American 'idols' with those from other nations, including the appeal of Americans in other lands and the acceptance of international stars and leaders here.

FEEDBACK: The increasing role of electronic media in defining the American hero makes an interesting tangential investigation Because of instant access to national exposure, many public figures in one walk of life now parlay their recognizability into success in another public field. Ronald Reagan and George Murphy, one-time actors, won election as Governor and Senator, respectively, in California. Rhodes Scholar and college football star, Kris Kristofferson, become a rock musician and actor; fellow Rhodes winner and pro-basketball standout Bill Bradley is now running for Congress.

Adam And Eve

FOCUS: All cultures make distinctions between the appropriate behavior for women and men. In complex societies where these sex roles are further divided into occupation and economic choices, institutional codes frequently formalize these behavioral options.

PROCEDURES: Data about sex roles in American society can be collected in a variety of ways. Parents and peers may be interviewed, also employers and employees. A list of occupations can be generated from a telephone book and then matched with subject preference by sex. High school and college publications can be scanned for statements about post-graduation goals and the institutional expectations for the separate sexes. Dating couples can be interviewed, or merely observed, and their role expectations may be discerned. Do they wear 'Master' and 'Slave' T-shirts? Is she his cheerleader? What behaviors seem to be sexually egalitarian or non-egalitarian?

FEEDBACK: The Equal Rights Amendment is a logical topic for debate. Articles about breaks in the so-called sex barrier appear almost daily. Again, the distinction between legality and acceptability might offer insight into the ratification struggle between feminists and traditionalists.

In Your Heart You Know He's Right

FOCUS: All social systems force their members to comply with a basic code of conduct. Many of these regulations and restrictions, especially in more complex cultural systems, are recorded and codified as a body of law. Many behavior patterns, however, are equally powerful sanctions but are informal and unwritten. Both types of cultural regulation, formal and informal, combine to insure the orderly continuation of a cultural system.

PROCEDURES: Students can interview themselves as well as their friends, neighbors, and family. A list of rules of behavior will be generated, and each subject is then asked to break down these rules into those known 'by heart' (informally) and those which are enforced 'by law' (formally). The areas of overlap and separation of the two regulatory systems is readily seen and can be discussed.

FEEDBACK: Younger children make fascinating subjects for this investigation. They are just beginning to learn the subtleties of unwritten cultural mechanisms and are usually ignorant of formal codes. They may know that running across a busy street is dangerous, but they surely do not know jaywalking is illegal. Further discussion of values and ethical decision-making frequently arrises from this experiment.

Red Light, Green Light

FOCUS: All legal systems have specific laws which have varying levels of acceptance within the society. The furor during Prohibition and the current move toward decriminalization of marijuana both reflect consider confusion over a culture's definition of right and wrong. The legality and illegality of a behavior pattern may be overshadowed by its acceptability or nonacceptability.

PROCEDURES: One 'safe' test of this anthropological concept is car counting. Unobtrusively stationing themselves at a stop sign or signal, students can record a ratio of law abider to offender and a motorist's choice of expediency v. legality when rushed. The time of day, the type of weather, the model of car, and the attributes of the driver might all be noteworthy independent variables.

FEEDBACK: Any exploration of a legal system can be potentially hazardous for teachers and students. High school and college classes often collect anonymous data about drug usage and sexual habits, but the risk of personal and legal repercussions should be weighed by the instructor before undertaking such a controversial survey.

Rites Of Passage

FOCUS: Certain periods in the life cycle of an individual are recognized and honored by that individual's culture. Specialized behavior and rituals frequently accompany such rites of passage, marking the individual's transition from one life phase of the culture into another.

PROCEDURES: Students should determine which rites of passage are significant for their communities and their culture. Tape recordings and scrapbooks should be collected and compared for baptisms, birthdays, graduations, weddings, anniversaries, and other ritual events included in the study.

FEEDBACK: In a recent film, The Apprenticeship Of Duddy Kravitz, bar mitzvahs were filmed by a struggling young producer and then sold to the happy participants. In Las Vegas, drive-in wedding parlors offer technicolor video cassettes and eight-track recordings of the ceremony. An appropriate discussion topic would be the increasing commercialization of American celebrations and rites of passage and the concurrent displacement of the personal, cohesive aspects of these events.

III. Language and Communication

Complex social, economic, and political behavior relies upon communication. One individual could not tell another where to find food, and one generation could not tell another how to make tools without communication. Other social species besides man have distinct forms of communication, but no species has developed verbal and non-verbal systems to rival those of man. A sign tells us to stop; so does a frown. Sirens signal danger yet they also tell us help is on the way. A centuries-old book can reveal historical secrets as accurately as a modern photograph. Human beings can communicate in an ever-increasing number of ways.

Out of this host of communication forms, speech has emerged as our greatest cultural asset. Through a series of agreed-upon sound symbols, man can transmit any information linguistically. As society becomes more complex, so do the methods of linguistic transmission and the cultural groups and sub-groups to whom this message has meaning. A football playoff means nothing culturally to an uninitiated Tassaday of the Phillipines, yet he possesses the linguistic competence necessary to one day decipher the event. Given our linguistic universal and the shrinking array of cultural particulars, man seems to ultimately share the capacity for true global understanding.

Baby Talk

FOCUS: The process of language acquisition and development is a critical step in the education of the youth of a particular culture or immigrants into it. Formal and informal teaching techniques help the students of a language master its phonetic structure and levels of abstraction and conceptualization.

PROCEDURES: Pre-schoolers and primary school children are the ideal subjects of this investigation. Given an ideas like love or peace or a picture with a conceptual message, they are asked to try to express the feeling this ideas gives them. Their verbal patterns and word choice in describing such an abstraction indicates the level of sophistication of their linguistic development.

FEEDBACK: A reversal of language acquisition can be used in the classroom. Students are given a sentence or a paragraph and are asked to try to communicate its message non-verbally through gestures or drawings.

Inner Space

FOCUS: Different cultures establish different rules of protocol and comfort governing conversation and other social interaction. In many Middle Eastern cultures, six inches is a comfortable speaking distance; two American lovers may be that close on a date, and then only in seclusion- three to four feet seems a more acceptable spacing in our society.

PROCEDURES: Students consciously vary the personal space among friends and family members while engaging in conversation. They may maintain the halitosis length from a steady date; a teacher or a friend of the same sex may be crowded.

FEEDBACK: Ramifications of this space-violation exercise can include touch and the personal exchange of goods. The European kiss, although increasingly acceptable as a casual greeting by Americans, once struck terror in stern Puritan stock. The ways we extend greetings and gifts to each other is culture-bound. We think nothing of taking candy from a friend's left hand, but an offering of food in the toilet hand would incense Islamic peoples.

'V' Is For Victory

FOCUS: Just as distance is important in social interactions, so are facial expressions, gestures, and total body language.

PROCEDURES: A non-verbal vocabulary list is developed by each student. What gestures do coaches and athletes use? teachers and students?... What subtleties of body language are evident in the classroom? at a school dance? at the beach?

FEEDBACK: Students may also consciously vary body language. A date can be 'cold-shouldered', or a rival athlete can be greeted 'with open arms'. It has even been reported that B.F. Skinner (father of operant conditioning and behavior modification) was once victimized by his Harvard psychology students. Every time he spoke from the right side of the room, student interest lagged, people yawned, and others dozed off. From the left, his lecture had everyone on the edge of his seat animatedly responding to Skinner's every word. In a matter of minutes, Professor Skinner had abandoned the right side of the room and was squeezed into the left corner.[1]

[1]This story circulates widely in university circles and its truth is unverifiable. Its potential for experimentation, though, seems obvious.

The Wrong Address

FOCUS: An individual's status in a culture is recognized and regulated by very specific linguistic conventions. Every individual receives and emits culturally delineated forms of address in conversation and in correspondence.

PROCEDURES: Conscious violation of this social code invariably produces culture conflict. Students should go home and address well-known friends and siblings in an unfamiliar, formal fashion. For instance, "Hi, Beth!" becomes "Good evening, Miss Wallace." Or, reversing the situation, the very proper Latin instructor, Mr. Dillon, is greeted as Dilly-Dally.

FEEDBACK: Consequences aside, the results clearly illustrate the function of formality and informality in social ranking. This investigation leads into a deeper study of cultural conventions: the role of honorary and professional titles, why and when individuals are on a first-name basis, the need for overformalization in diplomatic exchanges.

Alpha-Bits

FOCUS: Pictographic and ideographic symbols were the forerunners of modern alphabets. Such symbols are still employed, particularly in areas of heavy international traffic such as airports to facilitate cross-cultural communication.

PROCEDURES: Either at home or in the community, students try to collect as many non-literary and non-alphabetical symbols as they can. Traffic signs are one obvious source, as are magazines, books, and television. These symbols and signs can then be presented to the class in a guessing game format. Or students can design symbols to represent various functions. How could a lost and found be symbolized? a hotel? a hospital emergency room?

FEEDBACK: The history and the meaning behind selected symbols can be explored. Why does an elephant symbolize the Republican party and a donkey the Democrats? How are school mascots chose? What is the significance of corporate trademarks and family crests? What symbols are used at international conclaves such as the United Nations and the Olympic Games?

The Subway Science

FOCUS: The historical development of written forms of communication has allowed individuals within cultures to communicate with progeny long after their death. In addition to formal record-keeping and scholarship, however, informal written communication, especially graffiti, has descended through history to decorate countless public and private spots. The informal, highly personalized scribblings often offer frank cultural commentaries and insights unavailable through standard documentary sources.

PROCEDURES: Students can copy examples of graffiti in a variety of locales. Each graffito can be typed by topic, location, length, and apparent message.

FEEDBACK: Variations among urban neighborhoods, expressway bridges, and university lavatories is fascinating. From Lord Byron's etched signature in the Pentellic marble of the temple at Sounion to an obscenity spray-painted in day-glow colors on a gymnasium wall, graffiti offers an original cultural counter-message

That's Not Snow!

FOCUS: Different cultures and sub-cultures use different terms and numbers of terms to describe common phenomena. Skiiers have at least a dozen terms for snow conditons, Eskimos have over fifty, yet native Floridians have only one. Within American society alone, there are thousands of specialized vocabularies for student exploration.

PROCEDURES; Have students interview someone who uses a specialized vocabulary. How many types of murder do lawyers recognize? Tobacco growers produce how many leaf types? Do dermatologists treat more than twenty kinds of acne?

FEEDBACK: Ultimately, this exercise returns to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which posits an intimate relationship among speech, cognition, and environment.[1] Beyond social and occupational speech specialization, regional vocabularies and dialects are striking. Along the East Coast, a milk shake in Philadelphia is a frappe in Boston is a cabinet in Providence.

[1]Sapir, Edward; Culture, Language, and Personality; ed. by D.G. Mandelbaum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

From Hula Hoops To Frisbees

FOCUS: Cultural innovations and changes, to be accepted and integrated within a society, must be effectively communicated among its membership. This process is more readily observable in modernized societies with easy access to mass media. One case of pieing or streaking, easily dismissed as local folly, can gain notoriety on network television and capture the national imagination overnight.

PROCEDURES: Students can catalogue such sudden cultural changes and fads as clothing styles and hair length among themselves. Interviews with teachers, parents, and grandparents will offer some time perspective, as will research in old magazines, newspapers, and catalogues. The availability of foreign subjects and publications will add an international component to the study.

FEEDBACK: A class can create its own fad and follow its dissemination throughout a school or community. This adaptation from the rumor-circle parlor game pinpoints key individuals in the network of cultural communication.

IV. Economic Systems

Everyone lives in a distinct physical and social environment. Man's percpetions of, and necessary adaptations to these environmentsare his ecology. He utilizes available resources, through the construction of artifacts, to meet his wants and needs. Even given a relatively similar physical environment, though, individual and cultursl responses can be strikingly different. The heavy snow which brings life to a ski resort can bring death to a stranded caribou hunter. The economic formula of any individual within a culture must take into account the physical and social variables of his existence and the ways in which they are marshaled to economic advantage.

The fundamental economic concern is subsistence. Beyond survival, increasingly modern economic systems use complex division of labor, methods of production, and market networks to provide higher comfort levels. Yet, regardless of the sophistication of the economic system, the eternal questions of what goods to produce, how to produce them, and for whom to produce them remain. In examination, the minutae of any economic system can be momentarily laid aside and its common core grasped without ignoring the rich diversity of human existence.

The Kool-Aid Stand

FOCUS: Even though the American market system is the world's largest and most complex, it operates side-by-side with more elementary economic mechanisms. Simple barter and reciprocity are daily phenomena, and redistribution of goods through a central source is commonly practiced.

PROCEDURES: Ask students to be alert for evidence of such simple econcmic activity. Trading takes place constantly- baseball cards, food, responsibility for chores- and the payment of dues to a treasurer in a club is an instance of redistribution.

FEEDBACK: Students can violate simple reciprocal relationships with predictable results. Everyone knows a chronic borrower of small change or the cafeteria mooch. Or, children advancing into the market system can be seen playing at capitalism in the ubiquitous summertime kool-aid stands and neighborhood carnivals. Here, sophisticated market nctions work on a juvenile plane: capitalization, depreciation, overhead, reinvestment.

Madison Avenue

FOCUS: Advertising transmits the availability of specific goods and services to consumers within a market-dominated economy. Exposure to these goods and services whets consumer appetites and aims to stimulate price-based economic exchanges, the purchase of goods by the happy consumer.

PROCEDURES: Magazine and newspaper advertisements can be studied in a variety of ways. Types of products advertised and the frequency of advertisement can be studied, as can the correlation of advertisement with media presentation. What television ads appear during athletic events? a National Geographic special? with the Saturday morning cartoons? Similarly, magazines with different audiences advertise products aimed specifically at that periodical's readers.

FEEDBACK: Old catalogues and magazines, also foreign publications, provide time and space contrasts. Neiman-Marcus catalogues offer a glimpse of the super-rich and their consumption patterns.

Let Your Fingers Do The Walking

FOCUS: The labor component of the American system is composed of a proliferation of occupational roles characteristic of a complex division of labor. This network of interdependency creates an enormous web of reciprocal exchanges of goods and services.

PROCEDURES: Make a list of standard occupations using the Yellow Pages as a resource encyclopedia. Then try to plug someone you know into each of the occupational categories. The matched occupations and individuals can then be studied for demographic variables such as sex, age, and education.

FEEDBACK: People can be interviewed about their career choices. Their childhood dreams can be explored and compared with their actual education and adult job experience.

Mayflower Calling!

FOCUS: American society has progressed far beyond a full-time pursuit of subsistence requirements. Automobiles could become extinct dinosaurs, stereos could disappear and the quantity of life would not be seriously challenged. American overconsumption of luxury items, however, drains market incentive away from the subsistence needs of developing nations.

PROCEDURES: An inventory of items belonging to students or their families is compiled. The approximate value of each item adds up to the rough material wealth of the family. Additionally, each item should be categorized as a luxury or a necessity and a ratio of necessary to unnecessary investment can be compiled.

FEEDBACK: Some most unusual consumption patterns emerge. Most homes, even in economically depressed areas, have at least two TV's and three or four radios. In more affluent neighborhoods, a surprisingly high average number of automobiles and stereos is an eyecatcher.

Torn Pages

FOCUS: In a materialistic society, one index of consumer preference beyond sales volume is wear pattern. The popular item, be it borrowed or owned, deteriorates first with overuse. The worn item is eventually discarded and replaced.

PROCEDURES: The library is a good location for this investigation. Books can be checked for wear or lack of it and a wear index of popularity can be developed. The same could be done with toys in a nursery school or clothing in an individual's wardrobe.

FEEDBACK: Archaeologists, particularly those studying prehistoric cultures, study wear patterns of artifacts to determine their function and degree of usage. While the function of modern artifacts is usually clear, unclear usage patterns may develop. Students may be intrigued by the adult usage patterns at a local library; particular books may even be indexed by the sex of the borrower by looking at the book card. Other borrower and rental organizations, especially rent-a-car locations, might provide frequency and characteristics of client information for different models and products.

Garbology

FOCUS: Despite a growing national emphasis on recycling, American society continues to discard tons of potentially consumable material. Only the wealthiest of wealthy cultures can afford the indulgence of trashing a material surplus.

PROCEDURES: Observing sanitary safeguards, garbage can be analyzed for content and recyclability. Archaeology students in Arizona regularly sift through 'sections' of a municipal dump to estimate what kinds and quantities of goods American regularly dispose of.[1]

FEEDBACK: A simpler, but less accurate, investigation can be conducted in the school cafeteria. Students can stand by the tray window and estimate the percentage of uneaten food returned. Dietary preferences can also be determined by the kinds of menu items left on the plate.

[1]A syndicated newspaper article about these college students estimated American food waste in excess of 15%.

The Crusher

FOCUS: Subsistence cultures rarely discard or dispose of material goods. Organic remains and waste materials are used as fertilizer; wood chips are burnt; scraps of leather make thongs- every resource is fully utilized. American society has evolved has evolved to a point where it must consciously copy this rudimentary example, otherwise tons and tons of potentially recyclable material will blight the landscape.

PROCEDURES: Give a group of students 24 hours to destro an indestructible product: aluminum cans or styrofoam containers. After arriving at an exhausted appreciation of their indestructibility, students can reflect on their efforts and discuss possible solutions to the spread of this modern container legacy.

FEEDBACK: A parallel exercise is the construction of an artifact using only natural materials, or using only recycled materials. This process can be compared with subsistence tool-making and contrasted with the synthetic parts in most modern artifacts.

From Plain To Platter

FOCUS: Our food cycle, from harvesting to consumption, is remote and fragmented. A life-long apartment dweller cannot conceptualize the human and natural effort behind a plastic bag of frozen vegetables. Likewise, the housewife in the delicatessen escapes the primal struggle with game; she simply orders two pounds of tenderloin at $2.49 per.

PROCEDURES: Student field trips can expose the less-pleasant steps of the food process from which modern merchandising has insulated our society. Visits might include a butcher shop, a fish market, a farming of livestock facility, and the harvesting and storing of foodstuffs.

FEEDBACK: A more expensive and perhaps more controversial option includes the viewing of an Eskimo hunting ethnography from the Man: A Course Of Study curriculum. Americans cringe when Eskimo toddlers swallow raw seal eyeballs, yet their reactions will not be dissimilar when a corn-fed pig's throat is cut. Another more risque option is a visit to a sewage treatment plant. The expensive and unpleasant process at the other end of the clean, white tunnel offers another view of human pollution.

Liberty Gardens

FOCUS: Before a society can seriously accelerate its industrial growth, it must have a subsistence base. The quantity and sufficiency of food sources determine the amount of caloric energy available to the labor pool. This human energy, in combination with technology, produces the gross goods and services of the industrial society.

PROCEDURES: Make a neighborhood count of food resources. Count the number and size of gardens, types of food crops, the number of fruit trees, and the availability of animal resources. How would this area fare if self-sufficiency was suddenly required?

FEEDBACK: This survey has an American historical sidelight. During the Great Depression when the industrial base of the economy failed and millions of workers were unemployed, farmers were relatively well-off. Despite depressed commodity prices, they nontheless had plenty to eat while laborers queued up at soup kitchens.

Labels

FOCUS: Farmers and home gardeners enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables, but fewer and fewer Americans have access to just-picked produce. Consequently, foods must be packaged and preserved to maximize their freshness at supermarket counters. The fresh organge in the Christmas stocking, once a holiday treat, is today a supermarket mainstay. Modern refrigeration and chemical preservation guarantees a nationwide cornucopia of nature's bounty.

PROCEDURES: Analyze the ingredients of pre-packaged foods. What ingredients are natural and nutritional? What percent of the total contents do they comprise? Which ingredients are synthetic? preservatives? Finally, what additives serve a cosmetic function of taste, consistency, or color?

FEEDBACK: The sensory load of one's palate can be creatively tested. Blue food can do something unexplainable to a glass of milk; similarly, foods and beverages sampled blindfolded or with the nose stuffed are often indistinguishable. Food ground to a puree in combination with the sensory deprivation above loses all input to the cultivated taste.

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